

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Bicycling makes Washington, DC one of the most livable cities in the country. The District's population density, interconnected grid of streets, and renowned park system have long contributed to a favorable environment for bicycling.



Mayor Anthony A. Williams at Bike-To-Work Day

The *Bicycle Master Plan* will move the District to the next level, creating an even more bicycle-friendly city. This Plan is a guide to establishing high-quality bicycle facilities and programs over the next 10 years. Safe and convenient bicycle transportation is part of a broader initiative to create a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system in the nation's capital.

Implementing this Plan supports broader city goals. Mayor Williams has set a goal to increase the District's population by 100,000 residents in the next decade. Because there is little room to accommodate future growth with more automobile lanes, the city's transportation system must respond to this growth with other mode choices. The improvements outlined in this Plan will help accommodate the transportation needs of the city's growing population. Providing better conditions for bicycling will also help reduce automobile emissions, which will improve air quality in the DC region. This Plan also complements efforts to provide mobility along the Anacostia Waterfront and other revitalizing neighborhoods.

History of Bicycling in the District

Bicycling has long been a part of the transportation mix in the District of Columbia. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, bicyclists, pedestrians, buggies, and streetcars all shared District streets. The District of Columbia's interest in bicycling as an alternative to motorized transportation grew in the 1970s in response to the energy crisis. The first bicycle plan was adopted in 1976. Like most bike plans of the 1970s, it was not fully implemented.

The 1976 Bicycle Plan called for approximately 16 miles of bike lanes, 17 miles of trails, and 38 miles of signed bike routes. Some of these bikeways were completed in the 1980s, but due to budget cuts, the District was without a Bicycle Coordinator between 1992 and 2001. Today, the DC Bicycle Program has two full-time staff positions within the newly established Department of Transportation.



*22nd St. N.W. Bike Rental, 1950s
(Photo: Library of Congress)*

Bicycling Today

The use of bicycles for transportation and recreation is increasing within the District. Between 1990 and 2000, bicycle commuting grew by 55 percent, from a 0.75 percent share to a 1.16 percent share of all DC-based work trips¹. More than 5 percent of work trips are made by bike in parts of the Mount Pleasant, Logan Circle, and Capitol Hill neighborhoods (see Map 1. Census Bicycle Commute Map). Thirty percent of all bike trips are for work². The rest are for non-work purposes, such as shopping, school, and social/recreational trips.

More than 5% of workers commute by bicycle in several District of Columbia Neighborhoods.

Enthusiasm and interest in bicycling is also increasing. Between 1999 and 2002 the annual, non-competitive BikeDC tour grew from 1,500 to 10,000 participants. Regionally, membership in the Washington Area Bicyclist Association increased from less than 1000 in 1992 to more than 5,000 today. The annual Bike to Work day has increased from 300 participants at one location in the 1990s to 3,000 commuters at a dozen locations throughout the region.

Percent of households that do not own an auto:
District of Columbia: 37%
United States: 10%

There is great potential for increasing bicycle ridership in the District. The city's population contains a large pool of potential bicycle users. Almost thirty-seven percent of DC households do not have access to a motor vehicle³. Approximately 275,000 District residents live in households without an automobile or are too

young for a driver's license. Bicycling is an inexpensive, flexible mode of transportation. Bicycle mobility helps people find and keep jobs, access health care services, and take advantage of shopping, education, and recreational opportunities.



DDOT has striped 15 miles of bicycle lanes since 2001.

Currently, the District has 17 miles of bike lanes, 50 miles of bike paths, and 64 miles of bicycle routes (see Map 2. Existing Facilities Map). Recent improvements to the bicycle system include:

- 15 miles of bike lanes have been added since 2001.
- 20 miles of additional bike path are under design and will be constructed by 2007.
- More than 400 bike racks have been installed in the Downtown area, at District government offices and public libraries, and at retail locations since 2001.
- Metrorail eliminated the permit required for bringing bikes on trains and expanded bike access hours in 2000⁴. More than 8,000 bicycle trips were made on Metro trains in a two week period in August 2001⁵.
- All Metro buses were equipped with bicycle racks in 2002.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. *State and County Quickfacts*, Online: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/11000.html>, 2004.

² Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. *Metropolitan Washington Regional Household Travel Surveys*, 1988, 1994, 1999.

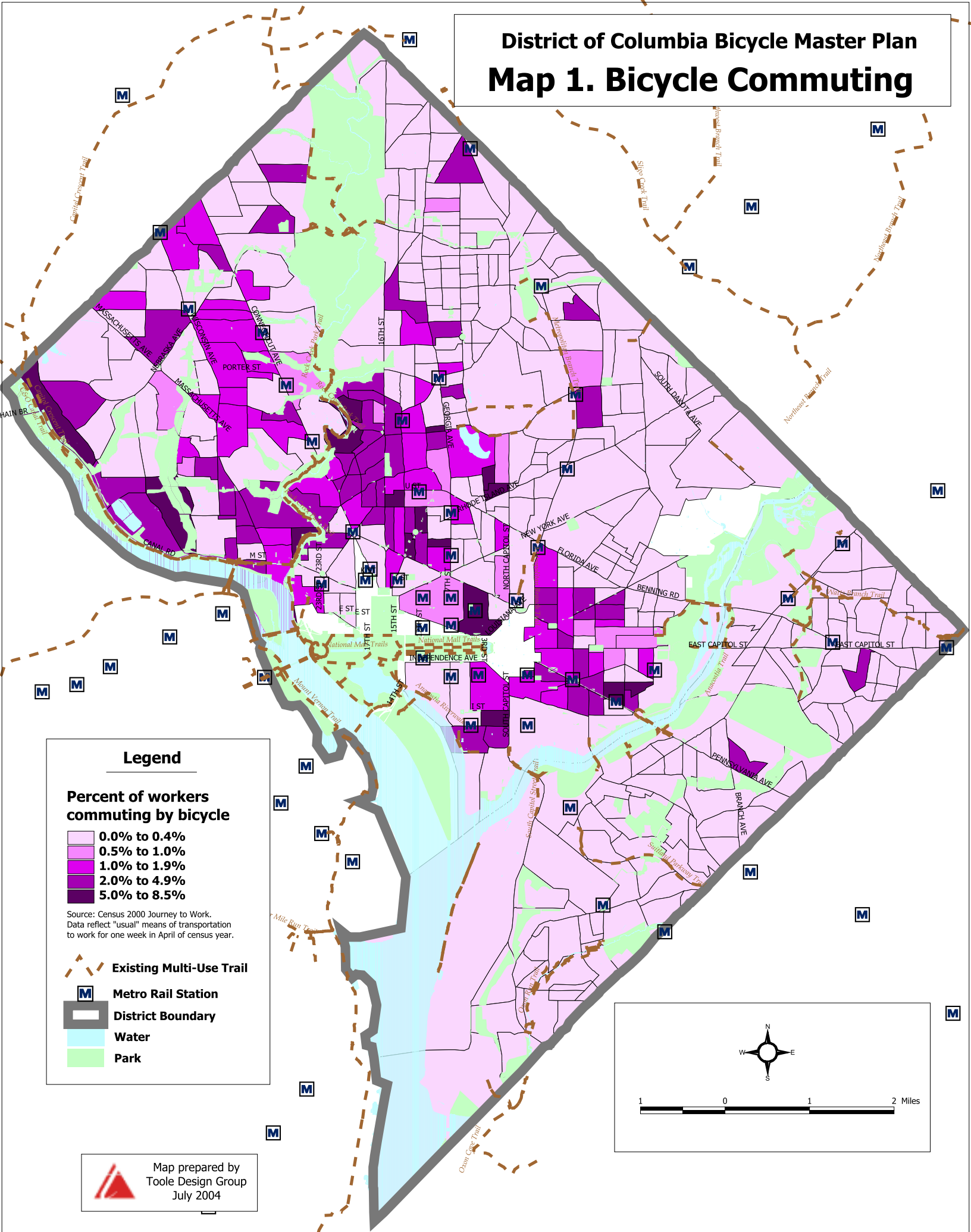
³ U.S. Census Bureau. *State and County Quickfacts*, Online: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTGeoSearchByListServlet?ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U&_lang=en&_ts=93199688005, 2004.

⁴ Bicycles are not allowed on Metrorail during the 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. peak ridership periods.

⁵ Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority. *Bicycle on Bus Survey*, August 9 to August 23, 2001.

District of Columbia Bicycle Master Plan

Map 1. Bicycle Commuting



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Map 2. Existing Bicycle Facilities

